

SADDLEBRED CLASS DESCRIPTIONS

BREEDING CLASSES

Breeding Classes are used to assess the CONFORMATION and TYPE of horses entered in this division. The ideal Saddle Horse personifies the meaning of 'show horse'. Classic conformation, presence, athletic ability and quality characterize the breed.

The ideal horse presents a striking impression. The animal should show quality through proportion, condition, muscle and coat. Any colour is acceptable except Albino. Average weight is between 455 and 545 kilograms and average height is between 15 and 16 'hands' (a 'hand' is 10.16 cms). Masculinity in stallions and femininity in mares is essential in breeding classes. Blindness is an automatic disqualification.

The following conformational points will be required of the ideal Saddlebred Horse:

HEAD – WELL SHAPED, CHISELED LOOK. Wide-set eyes, small sharp ears, set close together on top of head. A vertical face line with proportionately fine muzzle, large nostrils and clean jaw line. Penalties will include a coarse or plain head, roman nose, heavy jaw, large and widely placed ears, lop ears, small eyes, and parrot mouth.

NECK – Long, arched, small throatlatch flexed at poll. The base of the neck comes out at a higher point in relation to the shoulder. Penalties include a short neck, kettle neck, heavy throatlatch or a low set neck.

SHOULDERS – Sloping and deep. Straight and narrow shoulders are discriminated against.

WITHERS – Cleanly defined, prominent. A flat, fleshy wither will be penalized.

BACK – Strong and straight with well sprung rib. A sway-back (low-back, hollow back) is a disqualification. A roached back is penalized.

CROUP - level and strong with high tail placement. A sloping croup and low tail placement or rye tail will be discrimination.

LEGS front legs set well forward under the shoulder with well-muscled forearm, elbow free. Hind legs, while standing naturally, should show a vertical line from the pin bone to the edge of the canon bone. Hindquarters well-muscled to hock. Horses will be penalized for front legs set too far back, pinched elbows, sickle hocks, cow hocks. Lower legs should have clean, flat bone and sharply defined, clean tendons and sloping pasterns. Discriminations will include splay

feet, straight pasterns, pigeon toes, coarse or round bone, blemished joints, too wide or narrow stance. Blemished pasterns and tendons.

HOOVES – Moderately sized; good, sound quality, open at heel. Contracted heels, dished feet, poor quality hoof will be penalized. Always note that horses shown in breeding classes must be as close as possible to the IDEAL of the breed standard, displaying characteristics that breeders wish to develop and preserve within the breed. TYPE is of utmost importance in breeding classes.

FIVE-GAITED DIVISION

A Saddle Horse selected for the Five-Gaited division must be refined and elegant with its energy directed to correct form at speed. This horse should have great expression and the athletic aptitude to perform its' gaits with a flowing purposeful bold action driving forward from the hock. While speed is of great importance, style and form should never be sacrificed. In Ladies', Amateur and Children's classes primary emphasis is placed on manners.

THREE-GAITED DIVISION

The Saddle Horse selected for the Three-Gaited division must be refined and elegant. This horse should have great expression and the athletic aptitude to perform its' gaits with animated collection and precision. To accentuate the refinement of horses in this division, they are shown with a roached mane. Coarser horses or horses that require speed to achieve motion are not suitable for this division. Weediness is not to be confused with refinement in assessing the Three-gaited type. In Ladies', Amateur and Children's classes primary emphasis is placed on manners.

Three-Gaited Park Horses

Three-Gaited Park Horses are performance horses that are presented with a full mane and the emphasis is on manners, style, over-all finish and quality. A Park Horse's performance is to be animated and graceful at all gaits.

FINE HARNESS DIVISION

The Saddle Horse selected for the Fine Harness division must be beautiful, refined and elegant and possess the right conformation through the neck and throatlatch to enable the horse to wear an over-check. This horse should have great expression and a rhythmical airy movement. Weediness is not to be confused with refinement in assessing the Fine-Harness type. In Ladies', Amateur and Children's classes primary emphasis is placed on manners first and then performance.

SINGLE HARNESS DIVISION

The Saddle Horse selected for the Single Harness division must have the ability to work at speed. The horse is also required to wear an over-check but does not necessarily carry its head and neck as highly as the Fine Harness horse. The

Single Harness horse should have a rhythmical, athletic aptitude to perform gaits with collection, balance and speed.

SADDLESEAT EQUITATION DIVISION

The purpose of Saddle Seat Equitation is to prove the aptitude of a rider to get the best possible performance from a horse through perfect form and control. Emphasis is on the over-all picture and the ability of a rider to be one with the horse while taking charge of their complete performance.

The Saddle Horse achieves its look and performance by driving hard from the hindquarter. To attain lofty front motion the weight of the rider is distributed to the rear by means of a flat, English type, cut-back saddle designed for this purpose. The basic position or seat in the saddle depends on each individual rider and the particular saddle used. Some of these saddles have a flatter or deeper seat and is a matter of choice. The cut-back saddle is placed behind, rather than on the wither of the horse.

With the correct English type, cut-back saddle that is the appropriate size for the rider and acceptable seat should be found in the following manner. To assume the correct position and find the centre of gravity the rider should sit comfortably, with buttocks well back into the depth of the saddle and without stirrups. While bending the knee slightly, the stirrup irons are placed under the ball of the foot and stirrup leathers adjusted to this length. Even pressure of the ball of the foot should be maintained in the centre of the iron. Feet should be held in a natural and useful position (neither extremely in nor out) with the heel lower than the toe. Lower legs and feet should be controlled at all times and the correct knee is always on the stirrup leather and pointing towards the ground as the result of steady contact with the inside thigh.

Once a rider finds a comfortable and correct position of seat, hands are the most important feature. Hands are held above the withers of a horse at a height determined by the horses' head carriage and length of neck. Hands are at a slight angle with rounded wrists. Hands should be useful, showing control and sympathy, adapting to any situation. Any necessary movement of hands is done subtly without obvious or snatching movements. All reins of a double bridle must be used. The method of holding reins is optional. The bight of the reins should fall to the offside. Equitation riders do not sit perfectly still in the saddle. Rhythm with the horse is necessary but must never be exaggerated. There is a slight motion with the horse at the walk, this is not bouncing but moving with the horse. Posting at the trot is controlled and coordinated. A close seat in rhythm with the canter is expected. A rider should have a steady seat at the slowgait without twisting to the rhythm. Hands should always be placed suitably to the needs of the horse and used accordingly.